

Danny Carter, a 49-year-old Delphi employee who has been working in the Anaheim, California plant since he was 21 years old. And from Roger Smith, a retired Delphi worker now living in Hernando, Florida. Norbert Fuhs, a retired GM employee from Mitchell, Indiana. And Roger Talaga, a Delphi employee from Bay City, Michigan, who explained how the crisis would affect him and his family and the country.

DISPLACED VOTERS IN NEW ORLEANS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today the Attorney General appeared in the hearing of the Judiciary Committee for an oversight hearing, and we raised the question again about the protection of those displaced voters in New Orleans who have now the responsibility of casting their vote for a local election.

Ordinarily, Mr. Speaker, we would ask the involvement of the Federal Government, but the Voting Rights Act, section 2 in particular, guarantees protection of certain States and persons of the right to vote. Therefore, we cannot understand why the Justice Department precleared a system that will not work.

Today I have introduced with 42 cosponsors legislation to express the sense of Congress that the State of Louisiana and the Department of Justice must create outside satellite voting for the more than hundreds of thousands of displaced, disheartened Louisianans who have no way of going back to their home State at this time to be able to cast their vote for their city. They are, in essence, trying to come home. But with the little resources they have, today they cannot head home to cast a vote.

I hope the Attorney General and the State of Louisiana understand the Voting Rights Act and create outside satellite voting so that we can have the constitutional right to vote.

MEDICARE PART D DEADLINE

(Ms. CARSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to warn our seniors, a tax for your health will soon be upon you. The tax will be placed on those of you who have not signed up for Medicare part D by the President's arbitrary deadline.

The changes to the system are confusing to lawyers, seniors, and Members of Congress. We are forcing seniors to navigate unnecessarily confusing new programs and telling them do not pick the right program, just pick any program to prevent yourself from being faced with large penalties for joining late.

We must step back and extend the deadline until the end of the year to

ensure that seniors do not pay the price for a poorly laid out part D program through higher premiums for life.

I have had several town hall meetings in my district in Indianapolis dealing with this whole Medicare quagmire. Over 1,000 seniors participated; and, unfortunately, they left just as confused as when they came. These are not the questions that we should have had our seniors asking.

I would encourage all seniors not to get taxed further by failing to meet the May 15th deadline.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of seniors came to a series of town hall meetings in my district alone and their stories were almost always one in the same, what must I do, how can I get that done and how much will it cost my already taxed budget. These are not the questions we should have our seniors asking as they lie awake in bed at night. We must not add another tax onto the budgets of our seniors. We have to deal with this already failing system but we should not penalize the people for the failure of Congress to create an easy to understand and comprehensive system. Stop the tax and extend the open enrollment period. As I mark another day off of this calendar I warn all Seniors don't allow yourself to fall into this tax trap, be prepared to submit your paperwork by May 15th.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ENDURING MILITARY BASES IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last month the House surprised us all by unanimously agreeing to an amendment to the Iraq supplemental spending bill declaring that the United States has "no intentions of maintaining a permanent military presence in Iraq."

Who knew this Republican-controlled Congress would make such a positive statement?

The lead authors of the amendment were my colleagues and the Progressive Caucus co-Chair, Representative BARBARA LEE from California and Representative TOM ALLEN from Maine, both of whom have been instrumental in demanding that the United States not maintain any permanent military bases in Iraq.

Unfortunately, however, some people working inside the Bush administration are doing their very best to make sure that last month's efforts will be for naught.

One of the senior spokespersons at the U.S.-led coalition headquarters actually in Iraq had this to say about our lasting presence there: "The current plan is to reduce the coalition foot-

print into six coalition bases, four of which are operated by the United States."

So there you have it. The administration is not even hiding the fact that we are planning on maintaining four permanent bases on Iraqi soil, something they bureaucratically call "the coalition footprint."

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This appallingly casual reference to what the rest of us call an occupation is deeply insulting. Anyone who has heard the President tell the American people that we will leave as soon as Iraq is secure and we won't stay a single day longer should be equally offended, because the evidence on the ground suggests that this statement is deeply misleading.

Mr. Speaker, last fall I traveled to Iraq as a part of an official congressional delegation. I visited the Green Zone and the Balad military base, and I had the privilege of meeting with our soldiers serving overseas.

There were two powerful lessons that I took away from my visit. First, I saw that the troops stationed in Iraq are the very best that America has to offer. They are brave, they are intelligent, they are loyal, loyal to their country, to their mission and to each other. They are profoundly committed to this mission, even those who told me privately that they do not support the policy that underlies it.

The second lesson I learned in Iraq is that the perception among the military generals on the ground is that we will be there for a very long time. The military bases that we are building are like little cities. They have their own restaurants, supermarkets, and even their own gyms, theaters and bus routes. The troops deserve no less during their stay in Iraq, but our stay there must be for the short term. Our troops need to come home to their communities and these bases must be given over to the Iraqis.

The U.S. has already spent \$280 million to construct the four biggest bases in Iraq, and the supplemental spending bill that the House passed in March provides nearly \$200 million more to enlarge these bases. This is the real Iraq policy, not those phony platitudes and nicely worded sound bites about standing down when the Iraqis stand up, platitudes that President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld want the people to believe.

In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Bush administration's intention all along was to secure a lasting foothold in the Middle East. Forget all that stuff that you heard about going to war because Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, which we all know wasn't true. Forget about Saddam Hussein's supposed ties to al Qaeda. We know that wasn't true either. And forget about freeing the Iraqi people from the thumb of a brutal dictator. My guess is that right now most Iraqis feel brutalized after more